



# National Recycling Week: My lunch box – Foundation

## Teacher preparation

**Overarching learning goals:** In this activity students look at what happens to their lunch waste, learning about the best ways to dispose of their lunch waste and how to avoid littering. Through this activity students begin to understand that different types of waste can be reused in different ways and should therefore go into different waste containers.

**Teacher content information:** Foundation year students have a wide range of new things to learn about when becoming part of a school community. At this age one aspect of being part of school community is taking responsibility of one's personal belonging, including one's lunch and the associated waste. In order to take responsibility for their waste, students will need to understand the school's waste system so they can make sure their waste is disposed of properly.



While the activity is based around the lunchbox, it is not necessary to have actual lunchboxes; other food containers or bags are equally suitable. However, the aim of the activity is to create a sense of ownership and responsibility for the lunch container so it is important that students are able to identify and claim their lunch container, making sure it doesn't get lost and that it goes home with them at the end of the day.

**Hot tips:** If your students don't have their lunch in class you will need to have lunch outside to do the waste sorting activity.

## Student and classroom organisation:



**Step 1.** As students may not be familiar with different terms for different kinds of waste begin this activity by introducing the following terms:

- **Waste** – any material that is no longer needed. Examples from your lunchbox might be: plastic used to wrap your sandwich, your empty juice box or an apple core. You might be able to recycle, reuse or compost these things so don't just put them straight into the rubbish bin.
- **Recycle** – materials that can be made into something new at a factory. Examples from your lunchbox: paper sandwich wrap used to wrap your sandwich or empty juice boxes.
- **Reuse** – material that can be reused in a different or new way. Examples from your lunchbox: paper or plastic bags can be used to carry things other than your lunch.
- **Composting material** – material that comes from plants such as fruit and vegetables scraps. Examples from your lunchbox: apple core or banana skin.
- **Rubbish** – material that can't be recycled or composted or reused. Examples from your lunchbox: plastic used to wrap your sandwich and the plastic straw from your juice box. These things can't be reused, recycled or composted and should be put in the rubbish bin.
- **Litter** – material that has escaped from the rubbish or recycling bin and might pollute the environment.

**Step 2.** Review your classroom waste system with your students. What bins do you have in the classroom and what are they for? For this activity you will need at least a rubbish bin and a recycling container. Having a compost bucket would add to the activity but is not essential. Students probably won't have anything in their lunches to be reused although clean plastic and paper bags could be reused for lunches on subsequent days.

At the start of this lesson ask students what they know about the classroom bins and other containers used for waste. Do the bins have labels or drawings showing what they are for? Discuss any labels that the bins may have.

**Step 3.** Now it's time to look at what's in your lunchbox! Ask students to talk about what they often have in their lunchboxes and use these examples to discuss what



kinds of waste they create and where this waste should go. For example:

- fruit juice box is made from cardboard – recycling
- apple core is from a plant – compost (or rubbish bin if no compost)
- shrink wrap is made from plastic – rubbish (can't be recycled)
- plastic bag is made from plastic – rubbish (can't be recycled - could go back home to be reused)
- plastic orange juice container is made from plastic – recycling
- banana peel is from a plant – compost (or rubbish bin if no compost)
- muesli bar wrapper is made from plastic – rubbish (can't be recycled)
- bread crusts are made from plants – rubbish or compost bucket depending on the school composting system
- lunchbox is probably made from plastic – into the school bag to go back home (reuse)
- drink bottle probably made from plastic – into the school bag to go back home (reuse)
- paper bags are made from paper/trees – if they are clean and dry they can be recycled, if they are wet or dirty they must go in the rubbish.

**Step 4.** Now it's time for students to complete one or both of the activities on the student worksheet:

1. On the first page students draw one type of waste from their lunchbox that they think could be recycled.
2. On the second page students colour in the waste items in the lunchbox the same colour as the correct bin in the picture. For example, the apple core should be placed in the compost bucket which is green, so the students will colour the apple core green. Teachers can draw labels on the picture of the bins to be consistent with the recycling system in the classroom.

## Reflection

Show students the video; *Primary students manage waste in their classroom*, explaining to them that this is an example of what students do with waste in another school.



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[Managing Classroom Waste - Video 5](#) from [Cool Australia](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Engage your students in a discussion around video. Consider using the following questions:

- What do these students do that is the same?
- What do these students do that is different?
- Are there any new good ideas we have seen in the video?



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